(e) the total loss suffered by the Government due to the strike;

(f) the steps taken to clear the Postal backlog accumulated during the strike and the extent to which the backlog has been cleared so far; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to stop recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Group C & D employees of Departments of Post and Telecommunications as well as Postal Extra Departmental Agents went on strike from 06.00 hours on 23rd October, 1996 and remained on strike till 29th October, 1996. Their demands were : (a) removal of eligibility ceiling for grant of bonus to all Group C and D employees in these Departments, and (b) sanction of justified bonus based on actual traffic for postal employees and payment of full bonus as per revised formula for telecom employees.

(c) and (d). No, Sir. However, the Postal and Telecom employees federations and associations formally called off strike on 30th October, 1996. The Government had earlier decided to give Productivity Linked Bonus to all Group 'C' and 'D' employees of the Departments where such bonus is being given.

(e) Total estimated loss of revenue suffered by the Government is approximately Rs. 40.6 crores in respect of Departments of Posts and Telecommunications.

(f) Targets for clearance of Postal backlog accumulated during the strike were fixed. Senior Officers from the Headquarters were deputed to oversee restoration of normalcy in the field and detailed instructions were issued to ensure that the backlog is cleared within the targeted period. The backlog has now been fully cleared.

(g) Full use of existing arrangements for discussion between staff representatives and administration will be continued and all out efforts made to resolve major differences/disputes, as warranted.

[Translation]

Fire at IGIA

*23. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT :
SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the estimated loss suffered due to the fire at Indira Gandhi International Airport recently;

(b) the steps taken to meet the losses;

(c) the reasons for this incident and the persons responsible therefor;

(d) whether an enquiry committee has been constituted;

(e) if so, the details thereof and the terms of reference of the committee;

(f) whether the Government are aware of the general criticism against the composition of the above committee;

(g) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(h) whether the above enquiry committee has submitted its report;

(i) if so, the details thereof, and

(j) if not, the time by which it is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) The estimated loss to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) was approximately Rs. 11 crores.

(b) Claims have been filed with the Insurance Company M/s. The Oriental Insurance Company Limited, New Delhi.

(c) to (e). An Enquiry Committee composed of Shri S.K. Dheri, Chief Fire Officer, Delhi Fire Service, Shri Sharda Prasad, Additional Commissioner, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), Shri J.N. Bhawani Prasad, Chief Engineer (E), CPWD and Shri A.K. Chary, Chief Engineer (E & M), AAI has been constituted with the following terms of reference :

1. to ascertain the cause of fire in Terminal 1A at IGI Airport on the morning of 30-10-1996
2. reasons for the spread of fire
3. availability, adequacy and utilisation of fire detection and extinguishing systems.
4. measures taken to contain the spread of fire and protection of sensitive installations.
5. to assess the extent of the damage caused.

(f) No, Sir.

(g) Does not arise.

(h) to (j). The Committee is expected to submit its Report by 30-11-1996.

Minimum Rate of Wages

*24. SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to raise minimum rate of wages in the unorganised sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure strict compliance of the rise in minimum rate of wages by the employers?